

## Travel

## Checking in

One in a series of occasional reviews of hot new hotels

## Yeah, baby! ZaZa's swinging

By Cathy Lynn Grossman  
USA TODAY**What's new:** The Hotel ZaZa in Dallas.**Claim to fame:** Boutique hotel in the Uptown neighborhood (antiques, boutiques, bistros) caters to celebs such as Cher, Britney Spears, Steven Tyler. Spotted before a hot University of Texas game recently: football's Barry Switzer and Brian Bosworth, basketball's Juwan Howard and a merry blonde who looked exactly like presidential daughter Jenna Bush, a UT student.**The scene:** Casablanca meets Paris meets Texas: Dark wood furnishings in the lobby and rooms are set off by giant lamps with Art Nouveau patterned shades. A crystal lobby chandelier is spotlighted with rotating colors so the ceiling resembles a kaleidoscope. Historical fashion-photo posters lining corridors lead to suites with zany theme décor. Too bad the exterior looks like a pink stucco chain motel with balconies.**Who'll like it:** Moneyed folks with a sense of humor who enjoy eclectic excess and drama, drama, drama.**Who won't:** Business travelers who need to actually hear a client over dinner.**Bedding down:** ZaZa touts its "concept suites for urban adventurers," which you can check out online or from a monitor in the lobby. Thirteen types include Erotica, Zen and Shag-a-delic (with a round bed covered in raspberry velveteen on a purple shag carpet). Standard rooms are exceptionally large, with sumptuous fabrics, a chaise-longue area, an enormous bath and excellent lighting for reading, working (free high-speed Internet access) or dimming for romance amid lush linens and down pillows. A box of Milk Duds replaces that tired pillow-mint treat. Excellent morning coffee in the pantry on each floor. Wireless Internet access in the lobby.**Wining and dining:** Chef Jeff Moschetti gives the Dragonfly restaurant dinner menu a Moroccan spin and Southwestern touches, thanks to input from James Beard Award winner Stephan Pyles. There's a Texas-size bone-in rib-eye steak (\$30) or a selection of fragrant tagines (\$18-\$21) — chunks of meat

Photos by Hotel ZaZa

**Shag-a-delic suite:** It's the '60s, just like you don't remember it, with a round bed, beanbag chairs, purple shag carpet and lava lamps.**The Dragonfly:** Serves Moroccan food with Southwestern touches.

stewed with fruit and North African spices. With slow service in a noisy room, you need companions who don't mind shouting. Breakfast has Tex-Mex choices; also sweet-potato flapjacks with honey-poached pear compote.

**Indulgences:** The snug spa offers a dozen massage and body treat-

ments (\$80-\$140). The small, efficient workout room is packed with fitness machinery.

**Don't miss:** The Urban Oasis pool bar scene around 10 p.m. when hipsters, pro football and basketball players, and lean gals in tight jeans are packed so close to the narrow lap-length pool that you fear a splash party.**Greatest disappointment:** No chance for a late checkout. Stay a hair past noon, get charged for half a day.**Vital statistics:** 146 guest rooms; one restaurant; pool**The deal:** Concept suite prices range from the shagadelic (\$340) to the modern-styled "Art Suite" (\$295) to the immense ZaZa Suite, styled like a Parisian apartment (\$1,450). Least expensive rooms typically run in the mid-\$200 range but may be available for less during slow periods.**Information:** 800-597-8399; hotelzaza.com.